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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2839
INFO RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DILI 000387

SIPDIS

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PACOM FOR POLAD
NSC FOR HOLLY MORROW
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DEPT FOR IO, EAP/MTS
SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [MARR](#) [AU](#) [PO](#) [TT](#)
SUBJECT: PRO-REINADO DEMONSTRATIONS SMALL BUT WORRYING

DILI 00000387 001.2 OF 002

CLASSIFIED BY: Elizabeth S. Wharton, Political Officer, Embassy
Dili, State.
REASON: 1.4 (b)

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Demonstrations are being staged in Dili to protest the arrest and detention by international forces earlier this week of Major Alfredo Reinado, the leader of a group of dissident Military Police that played a prominent role in the violent clashes in and around Dili in late May. Although the numbers of demonstrators are small (between 100 and 200) the organizers include a gang leader known to have been involved in recent violence in Dili and the demonstrators have stated their intent to stage violent incidents throughout Dili if their demands are not met. Their message casts Reinado as a hero of the western "Loromonu" people as well as strongly opposing the presence of the Portuguese National Republican Guard (GNR) who initiated the process that led to his arrest. The organizers of last month's large demonstrations against then Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri have stated their intent to mobilize support for Reinado and there has already been some mobilizing in the western districts. International forces thus far have successfully kept the demonstrators under control, and by late afternoon yesterday there were no more demonstrators in evidence. However, the possibility of larger numbers remain, which could lead to increased unrest in Dili. End summary.

¶2. (U) In a still somewhat murky sequence of events earlier this week, Major Alfredo Reinado and a number of his followers were arrested on weapons possession charges by international forces after they moved back into Dili and occupied several houses. Both Australian Federal Police (AFP) and Portuguese National Republican Guards (GNR) were involved in the operation, but it was reportedly initiated by the GNR and the arrest ultimately was carried out by the GNR. At their detention review held on

July 27, the judge determined that Reinado and 13 others should continue to be held in preventive detention.

¶3. (U) Around 150 demonstrators gathered near the detention facility on July 27 to protest Reinado's arrest and to press for his immediate release. The demonstrations resumed the next day in response to the decision to keep him in detention. They were notably more agitated, and a number of them declared their intent to "destroy Dili" if Reinado and his men were not released. Specifically, they indicated to Embassy staff that they planned to disperse throughout Dili to stage violent incidents. There were several house burnings over the last 48 hours, an occurrence that had largely ceased in recent weeks, but it is not known yet whether the demonstrators were involved.

¶4. (SBU) The organizers of the pro-Reinado demonstrations are an eclectic and unsavory mix. Among them are a well-known Dili gang leader, Joao Becora, as well as two men who helped organize the pro-"petitioner" demonstrations in late April.. Leaders of the fringe group Colimau 2000, which allegedly played a large role in instigating the April 28 riots, were this week leading a separate demonstration for a new national flag. They reportedly also registered their support for Reinado and may join the pro-Reinado demonstration effort. Meanwhile, the National Front for Justice and Peace (FNJP), which organized last month's large anti-Alkatiri demonstrations and is led by dissident F-FDTL Major Augusto Tara, told us that they are mobilizing people in the districts to demonstrate on Reinado's behalf. Tara and other FNJP leaders said they were extremely upset that Reinado, who had "sacrificed himself for the people," is now imprisoned, while Alkatiri remains free.

¶5. (SBU) Observers of the demonstrations noted that the participants appeared to be primarily young unemployed Loromonu men. The involvement of gang leader Joao Becora indicates that at least some of the demonstrators are likely to have been participants in recent gang violence in Dili. In addition to their message objecting to the arrest of Reinado, the

DILI 00000387 002.2 OF 002

demonstrators carried several signs and shouted messages calling Reinado the "hero of the Loromonu people". In addition, the demonstrators were observed to be extremely hostile toward members of the GNR and demanded their immediate departure from East Timor. This anti-GNR sentiment resulted in general anti-Portuguese declarations as well.

¶6. (C/NF) The AFP relayed to the RSO yesterday their continuing concern regarding the response to Reinado's arrest response and the possibility of larger demonstrations. However, they are confident that they have sufficient forces on the ground to address both larger demonstrations and any attempt by the demonstrators to create disturbances around Dili. AFP sources expressed their view that the GNR went too far in their use of force during the operation against Reinado and stated that they had encouraged the GNR to keep a lower profile yesterday. However, Emboffs observed that the GNR if anything, raised their profile in response to yesterday's demonstrations.

¶7. (SBU) Comment: Reinado has enjoyed popularity throughout the western districts since his defection from the regular F-FDTL. However, the public identification of him as the "hero of the Loromonu" is new and may inject a "Loromonu vs. Lorosai" dynamic in future demonstration on his behalf. This would contrast with last month's demonstrations where leaders, regardless of actual composition, stressed national unity in their respective campaigns. Another new dynamic is the intense anti-GNR/anti-Portuguese sentiment expressed by the demonstrators, which could complicate relations between the international police and the local populace. Finally, the apparent willingness of Major Tara and his National Front to leap to Reinado's defense, indicates a continued overlap in their interests despite Tara's move away from the dissident military groups when he took on the leadership of anti-Alkatiri demonstrations last month. End comment.

WHITMAN